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Groups of countries in special situations: specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation

Letter dated 1 October 2004 from the Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, I have the honour to transmit herewith the ministerial communiqué adopted at the Fifth Annual Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked Developing Countries, held on 27 September 2004 in New York (see annex).

I would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 88 (b).

(*Signed*) Alounkeo **Kittikhoun**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
Chairman of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries

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Annex to the letter dated 1 October 2004 from the Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Communiqué of the Fifth Annual Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)

New York, 27 September 2004

We, the Ministers of landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), meeting here at the Headquarters of the United Nations in the sideline of the 59th session of the General Assembly,

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration[1] in which heads of State and Government recognized the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries and urged both bilateral and multilateral donors to increase financial and technical assistance to this group of countries to meet their particular development needs and to help them to overcome the impediments of geography by improving their transit transport systems, and resolved to create an environment, at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels alike, that is conducive to development and to the elimination of poverty,

Recalling also other relevant UN resolutions, in particular General Assembly resolution 44/214 of 22 December 1989 which appealed to the international community to extend all possible support to landlocked developing countries in their efforts to undertake economic measures and policies designed to promote a pattern of growth that renders their economies less vulnerable to adverse consequences of their landlocked situation, and General Assembly resolution 58/201 of 23 December 2003 endorsing the Almaty Declaration[2] and the Almaty Programme of Action (APoA),[3]

Recalling further the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and transit Developing Countries,

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[1] See GA resolution 55/2.

[2] *Report of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 28-29 August 2003 (A/CONF.202/3), annex I.*

[3] Ibid., annex II.

Recalling the Ministerial Communiqué adopted at the Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked Developing Countries convened in the sidelines of the UNCTAD-XI,[4]

Recalling the Sao Paulo Consensus adopted at the UNCTAD XI held in São Paulo, Brazil on 18 June 2004,[5]

1. ***Emphasize*** that the Almaty Programme of Action provides a global framework for partnership to undertake specific actions in five priorities in order to establish efficient transit transport systems in landlocked and transit developing countries. In this regard, we ***call upon*** our development partners and transit neighbors to fulfill their commitments regarding the effective and expeditious implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. We also ***invite*** the United Nations system, including Bretton Woods Institutions, and all other international, regional and sub-regional organizations, within their respective mandates, to support as a priority the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, including through programmes of financial and technical cooperation devoted to assisting LLDCs.

2. ***Welcome*** the decision[6] adopted by the WTO General Council on 1 August 2004, which would greatly enhance the chances for successful completion of the development round of trade negotiations launched in Doha. The new round of negotiations of the WTO on market access for agricultural and non-agricultural goods should give particular attention to products of special interest to landlocked developing countries, which are being increasingly marginalized in the international trading system because of the high transit transport costs caused by their lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness from world markets and additional border crossings. In this regard, the WTO is ***invited*** to complete the Work Programme for Small Economies that includes landlocked developing countries, before the Sixth WTO Ministerial Conference to be held in December 2005, in Hongkong, People's Republic of China.

3. ***Note*** with satisfaction the decision of the WTO General Council to include trade facilitation in the new round of trade negotiations. The establishment of efficient trade facilitation system is crucial for the external trade of LLDCs as their overseas trade is dependent on transit transport policies and trade facilitation measures of their transit neighbours. We thus ***emphasize*** the importance of LLDCs' active and concerted participation in WTO negotiations on trade facilitation. In this regard, we urge the international organizations, particularly, the WTO, the World Bank, UNCTAD, the World Customs Organization and the

[4] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development on its Eleventh Session held in São Paulo, Brazil, from 13 to 18 June 2004* (TD/412), annex IV.
[5] Ibid., Part II.
[6] WT/L/579

UN Regional Commissions, to extend well-coordinated technical assistance to all LLDCs, taking into account their specific difficulties.

4. ***Stress*** the need for the full and effective implementation of the São Paulo Consensus adopted at the UNCTAD XI in São Paulo, Brazil on 18 June 2004, in particular paragraphs 66 and 84 thereof, by the WTO and other relevant international organizations and donors in a multi-stakeholder approach.

5. ***Request*** the United Nations Office of High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) continue to mobilize and coordinate international support and resources for the effective implementation of the APoA in accordance with its mandate provided therein. In particular, the OHRLLS should redouble its efforts to mobilize extra-budgetary resources to assist LLDCs in their efforts to undertake specific measures for the implementation of the APoA.

6. ***Commend*** the Government of Kazakhstan for its generous voluntary contribution in the amount of US$103,000 to the Trust Fund established to facilitate follow-up activities to the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

7. ***Request*** also the Secretary-General of the UN to undertake necessary measures to provide additional resources to the OHRLLS in order to enable it to effectively carry out its additional mandate given by the General Assembly for ensuring the full and effective implementation of the APoA.

8. ***Reiterate*** the request made to OHRLLS, UNCTAD and the UN Regional Commissions to convene a meeting of trade ministers of LLDCs on their effective participation in the new trade negotiations. This meeting should be preceded by necessary substantive preparations including necessary studies on challenges faced by the LLDCs in the international trading system. In this regard, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD was requested to immediately start consultations, in coordination with the High Representative, on the date and venue for this meeting with a view to convening it before the 6th Ministerial Meeting of the WTO.

9. ***Commend*** the efforts made by the Government of Paraguay as coordinator of the Group of landlocked developing countries on matters related to trade and development in Geneva, in close coordination with the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Chairman of the Group in New York, in the preparatory work for UNCTAD XI and in the UNCTAD XI itself in São Paulo.